

Interrogation

[Setting: A small private room inside the police station. Two chairs, face each other. RN sits nervously in one of the chairs with a small table to his side. He has been alone in the room for 5-10 minutes. Lighting in room is diffuse and bleak. Room is otherwise empty. SA enters room carrying some papers. He is deliberate and confident. He does not offer his hand to RN. When he speaks to RN, it is in a measured but firm tone.]

SA: *[not looking at RN]* Hello, Mr. Nixon, My name's Agnew. It's Richard, isn't it?

RN: *[nods]*

SA: *[sitting down, scanning over police report]* Well now, Richard, you've gotten yourself into some serious trouble.

RN: *[clearing his throat anxiously]* I didn't do anything wrong.

SA: *[still looking down at the paperwork]* Officer Washington told me about your situation and it looks to me like you oughta be wanting to work with me and help yourself out.

RN: I am not a crook.

SA: Richard, you rob an old lady, get caught with a bunch of pot in your possession and then you tell me you're not a crook? Do you think I just got off the banana boat?

RN: It's not my pot and I didn't rob anyone.

SA: That's not what you told Officer Washington. You fit the description of the robber to a tee. You were in the area where the lady got robbed. She's already picked you out of a photo lineup. And I got an eyewitness.

RN: Eyewitness? To what?

SA: You know exactly what, Richard. You're gonna get forty years in prison for that one. Plus, you're holding enough pot to get you life in prison for distribution of drugs. Let's get on the same page here and see if you can help yourself out.

RN: I don't know what you're talking about. All I did was buy a little weed.

SA: Plus knock over a little old lady. What did you do with her purse after you took it, Richard?

RN: I didn't do anything with it.

SA: I know you had the purse and you also had the pot that Officer Washington found in your coat pocket. How much money you got on you right now?

RN: I don't know . . . not much. Maybe a hundred bucks.

SA: Three bags of pot and a hundred bucks, that tells me you're dealing, plain and simple.

RN: Dealing? I'm not dealing. That's money I got from my last paycheck.

SA: Or some of the money that you took out of that lady's purse.

RN: No.

SA: Officer Washington tells me you're tight with Coco and her husband. How long you been runnin' with them?

RN: What? I'm not "tight" with Coco or her husband. And I don't "run" with them.

SA: That's not what my sources tell me, brother.

RN; What? Who told you that?

SA: You ready to deal with me yet?

RN: What's in it for me?

SA: You provide me with enough information that I can use against Coco, I'll talk with the prosecutor about maybe getting you a deal.

RN: What kind of deal?

SA: Whoa, sport. You're getting ahead of yourself. I'm not going up to the County Attorney's Office and try and help you out on two major charges with out having some up front information that shows your cooperating. What are you gonna give me?

RN: I don't know if I should talk, maybe I need a lawyer, or something. This is not a comfortable situation to be in.

SA: If I book you right now and the word gets out that you got busted, a lawyer won't be able to help you or me. You know how fast the word spreads on the street. Coco and her crew won't want to deal with you. The deal with the old lady is another problem; we can't let you go 100% on that one because she got some injuries. That ain't gonna help your case, Richard.

RN: I told you, I don't know anything about that lady.

SA: Tell me about Coco.

RN: I don't know about this, if she finds out that I talked she'll kill me. What should I do?

SA: *[shrugs]* You told the officer that Coco and her husband have pounds of weed at their place. That's where you got the three bags that were in your pocket, isn't it? From Coco.

RN: Yeah.

SA: Did they front it to you or did you pay for it?

RN: They fronted it to me.

SA: That tells me something about your relationship with them. They trust you to pay them back. That shows you're dealing. How much do they front you?

RN: It depends how much I smoke. Look, I'm not a dealer. You gotta believe me on that!

SA: You're starting to piss me off, now, Richard. How stupid do I look? You know as well as I do that people like Cleo don't front people weed for personal use. They know you're going to sell it for a profit and pay their off the debt after it's sold. How much do you owe Coco?

RN: *[sighs]* I don't know. Twenty or thirty bucks, maybe. Give or take. I don't keep records. Cleo's a friend of mine.

SA: You know Richard, you're looking at a lot of time here. If you don't come across with all of the information I need, or if I don't think you're being up front with me, I'll just book you on the robbery and the drug distribution charges and you'll suffer the consequences. Makes no difference to me.

RN: I'm trying, I'm confused, I'm scared, I don't want to go to prison.

SA: Well that's where you're headed if you don't cooperate. *[Takes out a cigarette and lights it. Offers one to Richard.]* OK, let's skip the purse deal for now. We know you did that. Our witnesses have you pegged. Lets talk about Coco. One step at a time.

RN: OK.

SA: How much weed have you seen Coco with?

RN: I don't know. A lot. Maybe five or six packages at a time.

SA: How big are the packages, ¼'s, Lbs.? How much?

RN: I've seen both.

SA: Give me an idea of how much, one, two, three pounds?

RN: Give or take, sometimes more.

SA: More than three pounds?

RN: Yeah.

SA: So what you're telling me is that when you're at Coco's, there's as much as five or more pounds of weed there at the same time. That's what you said, right?

RN: Umm hmmm.

SA: And she fronts you some of it.

RN: Yeah, a little.

SA: How much did you see the last time you were there?

RN: I don't know. I just got a small bag and left.

SA: *[slamming the file to the floor.]* How much?

RN: Uh . . . er . . . about three or five pounds, I guess.

SA: How long ago was it that you saw Coco with that much?

RN: A few weeks ago.

SA: *[leans over and stares in Nixon's eyes menacingly]* You're lying to me, Richard. It was more recently than that. I know that, and you know I know that.

RN: Uh. . . I guess maybe it was a couple of days ago.

SA: Or just tonight !

RN: *[quietly]* Yeah.

SA: Where were you at when you saw her with the pot?

RN: Er . . . What's in this for me if I talk to you? I'm dead meat if I tell you what I know. What happens to me then?

SA: I told you, give me some good info and I can work with you, I could talk to the prosecutor and try to get you a deal. Don't cooperate and you go to jail for Robbery and drug dealing. You'll get a long stretch inside the walls for those charges, let me tell you. A long stretch.

RN: What do you want me to say?

SA: Like I said one step at a time, we know you robbed the old lady, lets talk about Coco.

RN: What information do you need to know to drop the robbery charge?

SA: I need to know everything. How much stuff she has, where she keeps it, how long ago was it that you saw it.

RN: Like I said, she always has two or three pounds, give or take.

SA: Where does she keep her weed?

RN: In her house, I guess.

SA: Where exactly in her house does she keep it, the kitchen, bedroom, where?

RN: She gets it from the back of the house, she doesn't let me see where she goes.

SA: How many times have you bought weed from Coco?

RN: I don't know. A couple of times.

SA: Richard, you already told me that that she fronts you the pot! That tells me that you are a trusted customer and it shows you've had

more that a couple of deals with Coco. How many deals have you done? A couple of times doesn't cut it!

RN: What I mean is one or two times a week.

SA: How long have you known Coco?

RN: Two years.

SA: How long have you been dealing with her?

RN: Since right after I got to know her.

SA: What other drugs do you and she deal in? Meth, coke, what kind?

RN: I just do pot!

SA: You just deal pot! Right?

RN: Uh . . . yeah, just pot.

SA: What's Coco's end of the deal?

RN: She sometimes has some coke but I don't do that.

SA: How much do you owe her for the pot that Officer Washington got you with?

RN: I had three quarters so I think about \$100 bucks.

SA: That's good, Richard. You know why? Cuz that's just about what the old lady lost and you have \$100 on you. Which \$100 is that? The \$100 that you took from the purse or the \$100 you got from selling pot?

RN: That's not the money from the lady's purse. And I didn't get to sell any pot. You guys have it. And I still owe Coco the hundred. If I don't pay that I'm in trouble.

SA: You're in trouble any way you cut it, my friend. You're either headed to prison for robbery and drug distribution or Coco and her crew are gonna take it out of your hide! Look at me, Richard. Listen to me. I'm giving you a way out that won't hurt so bad and you can move on after this is over to a different location where they can't bother you.

RN: What do I have to do, I told you what I know?

SA: OK, here's the plan. We're going to wire you up and you go to Coco's and pay her the money you owe her for the pot she fronted you.

RN: I can't do that. A wire? She'd know I was working with you guys.

SA: The only way she would know is if you told her. We do this all the time and the only way to help your self out of this mess is to do what I'm telling you. You want the robbery and drug charges to go away?

RN: Yes, I don't want to go to jail.

SA: Then this is your way out. Pay Coco for what she fronted you and then we can do the next step.

RN: What do you mean the next step?

SA: Well, we won't make you apologize to the old lady but we'll want you to go back to Coco with some of our money and buy some more weed or any other drugs you can buy from her.

RN: Do you know what they'll do to me if I did that?

SA: I already told you what's going to happen to you if you don't.

RN: I don't know, this isn't fair, I told you everything I know. You're the cop. Go do what you have to do, What do you want from me?

SA: Look, we have you with some solid evidence and both charges carry some serious time. The choice is yours.

RN: Maybe I should talk to my lawyer or something. I don't know what to do.

SA: That's your right but once you go that way you most likely won't be able to help us get to Coco. All bets will be off. Do the deal with us the way I explained it to you and it's a lot cleaner. No complications. No extra people involved - which means no one knows till it's over.

RN: Coco knows some of the cops here and she'll find out what's going on, I don't know if I want to take that chance. What else can I do to help myself out?

SA: I know for a fact she won't find out what's going on unless you talk and tell people what you're doing. I've been doing this for a long time and we haven't lost a snitch yet. Coco knows some of our cops because she's been in jail here not because she's friends with any of us.

RN: That's not what she says.

SA: Goddammit, Richard, you've only got two ways to go, my way or jail. The choice is yours, I'm not going to screw around with you all night,. Get with the program or suffer the consequences. Like I said before, robbery and dealing drugs is going to get you a bunch of time. Which way do you want to go?

RN: What do I have to do to get out of this? Tell me again, what kind of deal can I get.

SA: OK, I'll tell you again. You give up Coco and I mean with you wearing the wire and paying her what you owe her, OK. Go back with the wire on and buy some more drugs. Then I'll talk to the prosecutor about both charges.

RN: What happens if I do this for you? You goanna arrest her right then?

SA: We'll wait till you're out of the house and then arrest her.

RN: She'll know it was me that snitched!

SA: Well, she will eventually, you'll have to testify about your involvement.

RN: You didn't say anything about testifying.

SA: It's all part of the deal, you help us make a good case against Coco in exchange for your robbery and drug charges. The deal includes testifying about your involvement.

RN: You must think I'm crazy? Testify in court! Everyone will know I snitched.

SA: Like I told you Richard, it may seem like a big thing but the time you're looking at is a lot bigger. You can help yourself right now, tomorrow will be too late.

RN: I can do all that your asking but I won't testify. I can't be seen in court in front of all my friends. I just can't.

SA: Sorry, Richard. No court, no deal. That's just the way it is. We can't do this half way. What's going to be?

RN: I can't do it.

SA: Last chance Richard.

RN: No, I'm not going to help you.

SA: OK. We have the pot you had in your coat. Where's the purse and the contents?

RN: I don't know. I don't wanna talk no more. Leave me alone.

SA: Tell me where it is and we can at least get the lady her property back.

RN: Probably tossed in the gutter somewhere along the way. You got me all mixed up. Screw that old lady. I aint talking anymore without my lawyer.

SA: OK, Mr. Nixon. You've told us enough to put yourself in the middle of a drug trafficking charge and a robbery so I guess that's what it's going to be.